

A REFERENCE GUIDE

Collaborate with Impact: When to Opt for Traditional Meetings and When to Embrace Workshops



Thinkly Solutions
@thinklysolutions

Table of Contents

Introduction	03
Chapter 1: The Power of Workshops	04
Chapter 2: When to Consider a Workshop	05
Chapter 3: When a Traditional Meeting Suffices	07
Conclusion	08

INTRODUCTION

Hi, we're Thinkly Solutions.

Meetings and collaboration are broken, and we want to help you fix them. We're Caitlin Anderson and Seema Habash, and we're the founders of Thinkly Solutions; a women-owned business focused on **transforming traditional ways of working**.

We have 18+ combined years of experience in consulting with IBM and operations management with Uber. We love leveraging our Agile and Design Thinking certifications, as well as our experiences in bringing together cross-functional teams, to help organizations reach the best outcomes.



Effective collaboration is crucial for success. While traditional meetings have long been the go-to method for team discussions, they may not always be the most efficient option. Enter: workshops! Workshops provide a structured approach to problem solving and decision making that enables teams to tap into their collective intelligence. This guide aims to help you determine when a workshop could significantly boost your team's collaboration efforts.

CHAPTER 1

The Power of Workshops

Understanding the Workshop Concept

Workshops are dynamic and interactive sessions that foster collaboration and creativity. They provide a structured framework for bringing together a group of individuals to work collectively towards a common goal. Workshops encourage active participation, engagement, and knowledge exchange among participants.

Workshops utilize a combination of individual thinking time and discussion time to encourage idea generation and the exploration of diverse perspectives. They create an environment that promotes open communication. By leveraging various activities and facilitation techniques, workshops harness the unique problem-solving abilities of all participants, leading to innovative solutions and more effective decision making.

By understanding the concept of workshops and recognizing their benefits over traditional meetings, you can leverage this powerful tool as an alternative to never-ending cycles of meetings about the same problem with no clear outcomes. If your team has been feeling stuck, a workshop just might be the thing that helps you get unstuck!

How Workshops Foster Collaboration

Workshops create engaging environments using strategies and techniques such as:

Objective Facilitation: A facilitator guides the session and manages the flow of discussion, without pushing for a specific solution or outcome. The facilitator creates a safe and inclusive space and encourages contributions from everyone.

Interactive Activities: Workshops incorporate a range of activities to encourage engagement. These activities can include brainstorming exercises, scenario mapping, and voting sessions. Workshops utilize tools such as sticky notes or online whiteboards.

Structured Framework: Workshop frameworks guide participants towards the goals of the session. This structure maximizes productivity and ensures that you address all aspects of the challenge.

Open Communication: Tools such as online whiteboards allow people to contribute in different ways, which encourages participants to freely express their ideas and concerns. This enables more people to participate in the problem-solving process.

CHAPTER 2

When to Consider a Workshop

Complex Problems and Pivotal Points

Workshops are particularly effective when dealing with problems or pivotal points in a project or program that require a high level of collaboration. When faced with questions that lack straightforward answers or require a comprehensive understanding of various factors, a workshop can provide the structure and environment necessary to navigate through the complexity and arrive at innovative solutions.



Brainstorming and Innovation

Workshops provide the ideal environment for innovation and idea generation. Traditional meetings often do not have the time or space required to stimulate creativity and encourage participants to think outside the box. However, workshops provide a way for individuals to come together, share their ideas, build upon each other's contributions, and explore new approaches. By incorporating brainstorming techniques, workshops unlock the creativity of the group and generate a multitude of ideas that can lead to breakthrough solutions.



CHAPTER 2 CONTINUED

The Need for Diverse Perspectives

Traditional meetings often rely on a limited number of participants, potentially missing out on valuable insights and alternative viewpoints. Workshops, however, bring together individuals with different backgrounds, experiences, and skill sets, creating an environment where a wider range of perspectives can be considered. This diversity enhances the quality of discussions, increases the likelihood of innovative solutions, and fosters a sense of inclusion and belonging among team members.

**Building Alignment and Consensus**

In situations where building alignment among team members and stakeholders is crucial, workshops excel. Traditional meetings may struggle to ensure that everyone's voice is heard and that opinions are adequately addressed. Workshops provide a facilitated setting that allows participants to work towards a shared understanding. Through guided discussions, activities, and structured decision-making processes, workshops create a sense of ownership and commitment towards the agreed-upon outcomes.

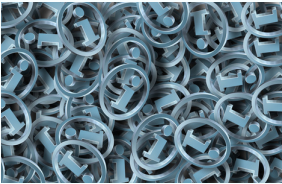
CHAPTER 3

When a Traditional Meeting Suffices



Clear-Cut and Small-Scale Decisions

When faced with decisions that require minimal discussion or deliberation, a traditional meeting should work. In these cases, gathering the team for a brief meeting to finalize and communicate the decision and assign responsibilities may be more efficient than investing time in a workshop.



Information Sharing and Updates

When the primary objective is to provide updates to the team, a traditional meeting can serve the purpose effectively. If there is a limited need for extensive collaboration and alignment, a workshop probably isn't appropriate.



Time Constraints and Urgency

Traditional meetings may make more sense for urgent matters. When a time-sensitive decision is needed, a concise meeting focused on quick discussion and immediate action is best. Workshops typically require more preparation and time investment, making them better suited for situations where sufficient time is available to thoughtfully engage.

Consider incorporating elements of workshops into your daily meetings to encourage information sharing or facilitate quick decision making. For example, you can introduce activities, mini brainstorms, or voting sessions. This hybrid approach can provide the benefits of workshops in everyday scenarios.

Recognizing where traditional meetings suffice ensures that workshops are reserved for situations that truly benefit from their collaborative and problem-solving capabilities.

CONCLUSION

Unleash the Collaborative Potential of Meetings and Workshops

In the rapidly evolving business landscape, Thinkly Solutions aims to transform traditional ways of working and help teams make the most of the time they spend together. By understanding when to choose a meeting and when to opt for a workshop, you can unleash your team's potential, generate more ideas, and achieve better outcomes.

Remember, it's not about replacing meetings entirely, but leveraging the power of workshops when the circumstances are right. We hope this guide helps you collaborate with impact and propels your team towards greater heights!

Please reach out to us if you ever want to chat about how Thinkly Solutions could help you.

info@thinklysolutions.com

